

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 111611Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
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COMFAIRMED NAPLES
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4889
SECDEF WASHDC
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
COMSUBGRU EIGHT NAPLES
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 14824

FOR ADMIRALS SHEARER, MOORER AND CALLAGHAN FROM CHARGE
DEFENSE FOR OSD: ISA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT MILI IT
SUBJ: LA MADDALENA

1. ON AUGUST 8 AND 9 THE EMBASSY'S COUNSELOR FOR POL/MIL
AFFAIRS AND THE DEFENSE ATTACHE PAID VISITS TO SARDINIA FOR
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MAYOR OF LA MADDALENA AND PREFECT OF
SASSARI. MEMORANDA OF THOSE CONVERSATIONS ARE BEING POUCHED
TO YOU. FOLLOWING ARE THE SALIENT ELEMENTS OF THOSE CONVER-
SATIONS AND OUR RECOMMENDATIONS ON COURSES OF ACTION YOU MAY
WISH TO CONSIDER.

2. MAYOR CANOPOLI OF LA MADDALENA IS AN INTELLIGENT, PRAG-
MATIC MAN WHO TAKES A CONSTRUCTIVE VIEW OF THE USN PRESENCE.
HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ANY SIGNIFICANT OR UNMANAGEABLE
HOSTILITY TO THAT PRESENCE IN THE LA MADDALENA COMMUNITY.
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THE PROBLEMS ARE MANUFACTURED IN ROMA, HE SAID. HE
REALIZES THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT THE NAVY CAN DO IN
LA MADDALENA BUT BELIEVES IT NECESSARY TO WORK MORE AC-
TIVELY TO INTEGRATE THE USN INTO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
AND IS PERSUADED THAT THERE ARE SOME POSSIBLE INITIATIVES
THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN THAT DIRECTION. AS AN EXAMPLE HE
SUGGESTED THE USN WORK WITH THE LOCAL SPORTS GROUPS TO

DEVELOP A LA MADDALENA BASEBALL TEAM THAT COULD COMPETE ON THE NATIONAL CIRCUIT AND THAT USN PERSONNEL TAKE PART IN LOCAL SOCCER GAMES. HIS MAJOR IMMEDIATE CONCERN IS HOUSING, ESPECIALLY LOW INCOME HOUSING. THE USN CAN HELP IN THIS REGARD BY GETTING ON WITH ITS OWN HOUSING PROGRAM. IN HOUSING DISCUSSION IT WAS CLEAR THAT ONLY FEASIBLE HOUSING AREA IS THAT CONTROLLED BY THE ORIGINAL CONTRACTOR (SEIS) AND THAT THE COMPANY IS STRONGLY FAVORED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO GO ON WITH CONSTRUCTION. THE LARGER HOUSING PROBLEM, HE SAID, CAN ONLY BE SOLVED BY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. HE THOUGHT THE U.S. SHOULD BE PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE GOI TO LIVE UP TO ITS SO FAR UNFULFILLED PROMISES TO THE COMMUNITY OF LA MADDALENA.

3. THE MAYOR AGREED THAT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO MOVE THE PX/COMMISSARY OFF SANTO STEFANO INTO THE NEW HOUSING AREA OR THE COMPOUND. BUT HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR NAVY PERSONNEL TO INCREASE THEIR PURCHASES ON THE LOCAL MARKET. AT A MINIMUM, IT WAS SUGGESTED, THE COMMISSARY OPERATION SHOULD NOT SELL ITALIAN-TYPE FOOD ITEMS THAT ARE READILY AVAILABLE AT REASONABLE PRICES IN LA MADDALENA STORES.

4. COMMENT: FOLLOWING CLEAR IMPRESSIONS EMERGED FROM THE FOREGOING DISCUSSIONS AND FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH USN
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PERSONNEL:

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 14824

FOR ADMIRALS SHEARER, MOORER AND CALLAGHAN FROM CHARGE
DEFENSE FOR OSD: ISA

A. THE ALLOCATION OF MORE FUNDS FOR CIVIC ACTION
PROGRAMS ON LA MADDALENA IS A FUNDAMENTAL NECESSITY.

B. THERE IS A WIDE GULF BETWEEN THE USN AND THE
COMMUNITY THAT MUST BE BRIDGED. THE MAYOR'S SUGGES-
TIONS ON SPORTS ACTIVITIES ARE GOOD ONES AND SHOULD BE
FOLLOWED UP--THOUGH IT IS MORE DIFFICULT TO ACCOMPLISH
THAN WOULD APPEAR ON THE SURFACE. MORE IMPORTANT IS
THE REQUIREMENT THAT A COMMUNITY RELATIONS EFFORT BE
MOUNTED BY PERSONNEL WITH A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF ITALIAN.
AMONG USN PERSONNEL NOW AT LA MADDALENA THERE IS NO
REPEAT NO SIGNIFICANT LANGUAGE CAPABILITY. IT CANNOT
BE ACQUIRED EFFECTIVELY AFTER ARRIVAL ON STATION. KEY
PERSONNEL MUST BE TRAINED PRIOR TO ARRIVAL. CONSIDERA-
TION MIGHT BE GIVEN TO POSSIBILITY OF ASSIGNING A U.S.
CIVILIAN WITH LANGUAGE CAPABILITY AND COMMUNITY RELA-
TIONS EXPERIENCE TO THE LA MADDALENA STAFF (POSSIBLY
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WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS TO INCLUDE PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT)
TO PROVIDE BADLY NEEDED ENTREE TO LOCAL COMMUNITY AND
LONG-TERM CONTINUITY.

C. AS SOON AS ITALIAN GOVERNMENT RETURNS TO WORK
IN SEPTEMBER, THE EMBASSY WILL RAISE QUESTION OF MOVING
PX/COMMISSARY TO LA MADDALENA. THE LACK OF REAL OBJEC-
TIONS FROM LA MADDALENA AUTHORITIES IS CAUSE FOR SOME
OPTIMISM THAT GOI RESPONSE WILL BE FAVORABLE.

D. WE HAVE STRONG SENSE THAT NAVY HOUSING QUESTION
WILL HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AVAIL-
ABLE LAND AREA AND THE EVIDENT SEIS FOOTHOLD WITH IMPOR-
TANT FIGURES IN BOTH LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS.

4. PREFECT OF SASSARI ROMANO AND SENIOR CARABINIERI OFFICER
FOR NORTHERN SARDEGNA COPPOLA GAVE MISSION OFFICERS
EXTREMELY CORDIAL RECEPTION. BOTH INSISTED THAT LA
MADDALENA POSED NO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS FOR REGIONAL
AUTHORITIES. BOTH REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED VIEW THAT THERE
IS NO ANTIPATHY TO THE U.S. NAVY PRESENCE AT LA MADDA-
LENA WITH ONLY MINOR (AND IN THEIR OPINION MEANINGLESS)

OPPOSITION OF SMALL CONTINGENTS OF SOCIALIST AND RADICAL PARTIES. PREFECT ROMANO URGED A GREATER U.S. CULTURAL EFFORT IN SARDEGNA TO GIVE VISIBILITY TO U.S. NON-MILITARY INTEREST IN THE ISLAND. THE POSSIBILITY OF VISITS BY SMALL ROCK MUSIC GROUPS (FROM USN NAPLES OR SIXTH FLEET?) TO SMALLER TOWNS WAS MENTIONED AS A USEFUL IDEA. HE ALSO SUGGESTED ESTABLISHING CLOSER LINKS AND EXCHANGES BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES OF SASSARI AND CAGLIARI AND U.S. INSTITUTIONS.

5. COMMENT: BOTH THE PREFECT AND THE CARABINIERI COMMANDERS ARE FIRM SUPPORTERS OF THE U.S. AND NATO AND TO SOME EXTENT THE EQUANIMITY WITH WHICH THEY LOOKED
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AT THE USN PRESENCE IN LA MADDALENA IS A FUNCTION OF THEIR CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL LEANINGS AS WELL AS THE NOT UNCOMMON ITALIAN PROPENSITY TO SAY WHAT THEY THINK THEIR INTERLOCUTORS WANT TO HEAR. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, WE TEND TO AGREE THAT IN TERMS OF THE ATTITUDE OF THE GENERAL POPULATION OF SARDEGNA, THE USN PRESENCE ON LA MADDALENA IS VIEWED WITH SYMPATHY.

6. THE EMBASSY IS LOOKING AT WAYS IN WHICH THE CULTURAL VISIBILITY OF THE U.S. CAN BE ENHANCED ON SARDEGNA. THE NOTION OF PROVIDING SMALL MUSICAL COMBOS TO ENTERTAINMENT STARVED LESSER POPULATION CENTERS ON THE ISLAND IS, WE THINK, A GOOD ONE. IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR THE USN IN ITALY TO INVENTORY ITS CAPABILITIES IN THIS REGARD AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD COORDINATING SUCH AN EFFORT WITH LOCAL SARDINIAN AUTHORITIES. HOLMES

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